

## Academic Senate Recommendation

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**Title: Recommendations for Improving Understanding of Class Modalities**

**Author/Committee: Ad Hoc Modalities Committee**

**Modalities Committee Vote: one abstention/19 April 2022**

**Senate Executive Endorsement Date (1<sup>st</sup> Read): unanimous/27 April 2022**

**Senate Endorsement Date (1<sup>st</sup> Read): unanimous/3 May 2022**

**Senate Executive Endorsement Date (2<sup>nd</sup> Read): unanimous/10 May 2022**

**Senate Endorsement Date (2<sup>nd</sup> Read): unanimous/17 May 2022**

### **Context:**

There have been significant changes in class delivery methods as a result of emergency remote instruction, innovation, and shifts in student expectations during the pandemic era. For example, distance education classes had tended to be delivered asynchronously, but now many online classes are offered with synchronous learning and teaching activities. As such, Santa Monica College introduced new “modalities” to describe the various class delivery methods. In addition, there are [impending Title V changes](#) that specify institutional responsibility for substantive contact and communication about delivery details prior to enrollment. There has been considerable confusion amongst faculty and students about responsibilities, expectations, and the practical implementation of delivery modalities.

### **Rationale:**

- There is considerable confusion and lack of clear communication in the SMC community about the existing terminology and implementation of class modality options.
- Title V regulations for distance education have recently been updated.
- SMC strives to provide clear information about class options to ensure equitable access to education for all students.
- There should be shared governance on all issues related to professional development and curriculum.

## Recommendations:

- The SMC online schedule of classes should be clearer and more user-friendly, including changing the word “arrange” for asynchronous online classes, more use of icons, more filter options, and more rich description, in consultation with students and faculty.
- SMC “modality” descriptors should be made clearer and simpler, in consultation with faculty and students.
- Academic Affairs should consult with the full Senate body, (in addition to ongoing collaboration with students, and other stakeholders) at least twice each semester in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years on course delivery modalities and changes to online scheduling.
- Academic Affairs should consult with the Academic Senate’s Department Chairs Committee and Curriculum Committee for any changes to course delivery modalities and changes to online scheduling.
- A strategic communication and education campaign for helping faculty [understand pedagogical considerations and legal responsibilities](#) regarding class delivery modalities should be delivered in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Fall and Spring Professional Development Day sessions in both academic years
  - Presentations to the full Academic Senate in both academic years
  - Presentations to the Chairs and Curriculum Committees in both academic years
  - Inclusion in the Online Teaching and Design course curriculum
  - Presentations in the Winter and/or Summer Distance Education Institutes
  - Presentations to all departments on departmental professional development days (at least once to all departments between August 2022 and June 2024)
- A strategic communication and education campaign for students should be developed and implemented for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years, including, but not limited to, orientation materials; print; social media; e-mail or other electronic media; workshops in key classes such as English 1, first-year Math courses, and Counseling 20; presentations to Associated Students groups; and any other methods of helping students understand the range of modalities.
- A strategic communication and education campaign for Counselors and all other student-facing services staff should be developed and implemented for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years to ensure that students receive correct information about modalities.